

October 7, 2002

**Public Notice for 401 Certification
Doran Marsh Enhancement Project**

On September 16, 2002 the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board) received an application from Ms. Michelle Julene, on behalf of Sonoma County Regional Parks (County), requesting approval for disturbances to waters of the State (wetlands) and other water quality impacts associated with the development of the proposed project.

The Doran Marsh project site is located in Doran Regional Park in Bodega Bay. Three culverts beneath Doran Beach Road have accumulated large amounts of silt, which has resulted in impaired tidal circulation. In order to restore tidal circulation, and thereby maintain the marsh habitat, the applicant proposes to remove the accumulated silt and excavate a small channel extending in both directions from the culverts. Doran Marsh was originally created as a mitigation measure for construction of the Spud Point Marina, and is under permit from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps). The proposed project is a direct result of recommendations made by Wetlands Research Associates (WRA) after having conducted the 4th year monitoring study required by the Army Corps permit. WRA recommended, and the applicant proposes, the removal of silt from the culverts and the construction of a channel extending approximately 425 feet from the North side of the culverts and approximately 100 feet from the South side of the culverts. Most of the channel will be 1 foot wide at the bottom, 3 feet wide at the top (2:1 slope), and 1 foot deep. However, dredging within 25 feet of the culverts will equal the combined width of the culverts (11 feet).

The County has not yet decided on a contractor, so specifics about the manner in which the excavation will take place are not known at this time. However, a portion of the work can be done with equipment stationed on Doran Creek Road. Matting will likely be placed over the pickleweed if equipment is needed in the marsh itself. The dredge material will be placed in the County's Birdwalk Coastal Access ponds, which are intended for the disposal of dredge material from Bodega Bay.

Excavation is proposed to take place during the period of August 15 to February 1 in order to avoid Black Rail nesting season. The actual start date will be determined based on the tidal schedule. WRA recommended that excavation take place during a series of neap tides (with relatively low, high tides) so that the weir boards at the Tide Gate can be removed to let the marsh drain fully. Tidal marsh flooding will not be excluded for more than 24 hours during a work period. County staff will be on the project site during excavation. The County determined that the project is categorically exempt from CEQA under Section 15301, exemption for existing facilities.

At this time the Regional Water Board is in the process of reviewing the proposed project regarding the issuance of the 401 Certification Permit. The Regional Water Board will consider all comments pertaining to this project which are received during a 21-day comment period that begins on the first date of issuance of this letter. If you have any questions or comments, please contact staff member Lauren Hocker by email at hockl@rb1.swrcb.ca.gov, or send comments to Regional Water Board, 5550 Skylane Blvd., Suite A, Santa Rosa, CA 95403.